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St George Tucker's "Old Bachelor" Essay on Benevolence and Slavery: A critical edition

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ST. GEORGE TUCKER'S "OLD BACHELOR" ESSAY ON BENEVOLENCE AND SLAVERY

a critical edition

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to provide a literary and historical approach to an unpublished essay written by St. George Tucker (1752-1827), Williamsburg jurist, poet, and anti-slavery advocate; specifically this study presents an introduction to, an established text of, and a critical commentary on Tucker's "Old Bachelor" essay on benevolence and slavery.

The introduction briefly examines Tucker's life, his published A Dissertation on Slavery with a Proposal for the Gradual Abolition of It in the State of Virginia, and anti-slavery sentiment in Jeffersonian Virginia.

The annotated text of the essay on benevolence and slavery is an exact transcription of Tucker's unpublished manuscript, which is now a part of the Tucker-Coleman Collection at the Earl Gregg Swem Library, The College of William and Mary.

The critical commentary briefly examines the friendship of Tucker and William Wirt, Wirt's "The Old Bachelor" newspaper column, Tucker's proposed "The Hermit of the Mountain" newspaper column, analogues of Tucker's essay on benevolence and slavery, and the style of Tucker's essay on benevolence and slavery.

The conclusion reached is that, viewed together, Tucker's Dissertation on Slavery and his essay on benevolence and slavery reflect his ambivalent response to slavery, that is his consideration of blacks as property and his refusal to assimilate them into white society juxtaposed with his consideration of blacks as persons and his desire to free them.

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INTRODUCTION

St. George Tucker, destined to become an important jurist, poet, and anti-slavery advocate in Jefferson's Virginia, was born to Anne Butterfield and Henry Tucker on July 10, 1752, at The Grove, near Port Royal, Bermuda.[1] Tucker grew up in Bermuda where at the age of sixteen he attended a private school run by the Reverend Alexander Richardson, rector of St. Peter's Church, the Mother Church of Bermuda. At eighteen Tucker studied law under the direction of his uncle, John Slater, the Attorney General of Bermuda. After a year of reading law in his uncle's office, he set sail for Virginia and the College of William and Mary.

In January of 1772 Tucker arrived in Williamsburg via New York, Philadelphia, and Norfolk. Once in Williamsburg he immediately enrolled in William and Mary where he spent one year in a general course of study under the direction of the Reverend Thomas Gwatkin, the College's professor of natural philosophy. Then Tucker spent one year reading law in the office of George Wythe, well known Williamsburg jurist. In August of 1773 Tucker returned to his native Bermuda, but in November of the same year he sailed back to Virginia to accept a clerkship in the Dinwiddie County Court. In April of 1774 he received his license to practice law in the county courts of Virginia, and in April of 1775 he gained admittance to the bar of the General Court of Virginia.

After the courts of Virginia closed with the advent of the American Revolution, St. George Tucker returned to Bermuda in June, 1775. His native island licensed him as an attorney and solicitor. Between the summer of 1776 and the fall of 1778 Tucker, his father, his eldest brother, Richard Jennings, and John Jennings all were involved in shipping activities among Bermuda, the West Indies, and the American states. On September 23, 1778, Tucker, who had recently returned to Virginia, married Frances Bland Randolph, the widow of John Randolph and the mistress of three plantations. Through his marriage to Widow Randolph, Tucker acquired three stepsons and a secure position in the Virginia planter oligarchy. He spent the first year of his marriage as the master of his wife's 1,305 acre "Matoax" plantation on the Appomattox River in Chesterfield County. In the fall of 1779 he renewed to some extent his participation in shipping activities.

In 1781 when Benedict Arnold invaded Virginia and Lord Cornwallis made advances in North Carolina, Tucker joined the militia as a major in order to fight for the independence of his adopted country. Major Tucker was wounded, ironically by one of his own men, at the Battle of Guilford Courthouse, North Carolina. Later Tucker, having risen to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, witnessed the Battle of Yorktown the events of which he recorded in a private journal. After fighting for the American cause Tucker, having been elected by the House of delegates to fill out an unexpired term, served on the Virginia Council of State from January to May of 1782. He decided in 1782

to renew his practice of law in Virginia which the Revolution had discontinued seven years earlier.

St. George Tucker entered county court practice in Chesterfield County in February, 1783. One month later he was named commonwealth attorney of that county. In April of 1786 Tucker gained admittance to the bar of the General Court in Richmond. In September of the same year he, along with James Madison and Edmund Pendleton, represented Virginia at the Annapolis Convention. After his wife's death on January 18, 1788, Tucker and his children moved from "Matoax" to Williamsburg where he continued his law practice.

Appointed a General Court judge in 1788, Tucker served in that capacity for the next sixteen years. Succeeding his mentor, George Wythe, Tucker became professor of law at William and Mary in 1790 and held that chair for the next fourteen years. In 1791 he was appointed to a committee of revisors which had full authority to prepare a new edition of Virginia's laws. In October of that same year Tucker married another wealthy widow, Lelia Skipwith Carter, the mistress of "Corotoman" plantation and the mother two children. St. George Tucker's annotated five-volume edition of Blackstone's Commentaries, which was first published in 1803, earned him the appellation of "the American Blackstone." From 1804 to 1811 Tucker was a judge of the Virginia Court of Appeals, the state's highest court, and from 1813 to 1825 he served as a judge of the United States District Court in Virginia. St. George Tucker died on November 10, 1827, at the age of seventy-five.

When he was a professor at William and Mary, Tucker published, usually anonymously, some of his law and police lectures as pamphlets. Since he was also serving as a General Court judge at that time, he preferred to remain anonymous because he felt it was improper for a judge to engage in public political debate. Tucker's only signed pamphlet of the 1790's was A Dissertation on Slavery with a Proposal for the Gradual Abolition of It in the State of Virginia.[2] Literary historian Richard Beale Davis calls Tucker's Dissertation on Slavery "the most significant writing contra of the 1790's."[3] In 1796, the year of its publication, Tucker sent a copy of his pamphlet and a respectful letter commending it to the Virginia House of Delegates, but that public body refused even to discuss his ideas. After failing to introduce Tucker's plan for gradual abolition, G.K. Taylor, Professor Tucker's friend, wrote to him, "Such is the force of Prejudice, that in the House of Delegates, characters were found who voted against the letter and its inclosure lying on the table.... I despair of being able to obtain leave to bring it in."[4] Later Tucker appended his Dissertation on Slavery to volume one, part two, of his edition of Blackstone. By including it in this work which would be read by lawyers throughout the state and nation, Tucker still must have had hopes in 1803 of someday witnessing the enactment of his proposal. But that day was never to be.

Tucker begins his Dissertation on Slavery with a strong attack upon that peculiar institution:

> Whilst America hath been the land of promise to Europeans, and their descendents, it hath been the vale of death to millions of the wretched sons of Africa. The genial light

> of liberty, which hath here shone with unrivalled luster on the former, hath yielded no comfort to the latter, but to them hath proved a pillar of darkness, whilst it hath conducted the former to the most enviable state of human existence. Whilst we were offering up vows at the shrine of Liberty, and sacrificing hecatombs upon her altars; whilst we swore irreconcilable hostility to her enemies, and hurled defiance in their faces; whilst we adjured the God of Hosts to witness our resolution to live free, or die, and imprecated curses on their heads who refused to unite with us in establishing the empire of freedom; we were imposing upon our fellow men, who differ in complexion from us, a slavery, ten thousand times more cruel than the utmost extremity of those grievances and oppressions, of which we complained. Such are the inconsistencies of human nature; such the blindness of those who pluck not the beam out of their own eyes, whilst they can espy a moat, in the eyes of their brother; such that partial system of morality which confines rights and injuries, to particular complexions; such the effect of that self-love which justifies, or condemns, not according to principle, but to the agent.[5]

These opening arguments, like the anti-slavery arguments of other writers contemporary with Tucker, are based on sentimental, religious, moral, and political grounds. Tucker is quick to point out the inconsistency between the doctrine of natural rights so widely proclaimed by American patriots and the institution of slavery so widely practiced by those same men.

Before actually presenting his proposal for gradual abolition, Tucker reviews in his Dissertation on Slavery the history of slavery and the laws concerning it. He discusses the origins of slavery in the world and in America. After defining political, civil, and domestic slavery, he refutes every possible justification of any type of slavery. Tucker, writing as teacher and a judge, then gives a detailed legal history of slavery, of slave trade, of black codes, and of manumission in Virginia. After defending gradual

emancipation, he rejects simultaneous emancipation and involuntary colonization on social and economic grounds. In Tucker's opinion, to free all slaves at once would create famine among the blacks, jeopardize the safety of the whites, and violate the property rights of the masters.[6] And to colonize all freed slaves, perhaps against their will, would cost the state too much financially and require too much of the blacks who are totally unprepared for mass freedom.[7] Finally Tucker presents his proposal for the gradual abolition of slavery in Virginia, a plan which he considers to be a practical solution to the problems associated with emancipation.

Tucker's plan for gradual abolition called for the freeing of all female slaves born after the plan's adoption, but not until their twenty-eighth birthday. Thus masters would be compensated for the cost of their support in childhood by being able to work them until they turned twenty-eight. All male and female descendants of these emancipated females would also be free, but if born on the plantation, they too must serve until their twenty-eighth year. When freed, each slave would receive $20 and suitable clothing and bedding. In addition, Tucker's proposal called for the registration of all black children born after the proposal's adoption with the clerk of each county, the placing of black servants on an equal status with white servants, the exclusion of blacks from public office, and the strengthening of laws discriminating against free blacks so as to encourage their voluntary emigration to the unsettled areas of the southwest where they might establish all-black societies.[8]

Tucker's proposal for the gradual abolition of slavery in Virginia was actually a revival and a modification of a less definite plan drawn up by Thomas Jefferson, George Wythe, and Edmund Pendleton in 1779. In their work on a committee to revise the laws of Virginia in accordance with "truly republican" principles, these three men evolved a proposal for emancipation which they planned to introduce in the legislature. Writing of this proposal later in his Notes on the State of Virginia, Jefferson said that the plan was:

> To emancipate all slaves born after passing the act....they /children born into slavery/ should continue with their parents to a certain age, then be brought up, at the public expense, to tillage, arts or sciences, according to their geniuses, till the females should be eighteen, and the males twenty-one years of age, when they should be colonized to such place as the circumstances of the time should render most proper, sending them out with arms, implements of household and of the handicraft arts, seeds, pairs of the useful domestic animals, & c. to declare them a free and independant people, and extend to them our alliance and protection, till they shall have acquired strength.[9]

As it turned out, the three committeemen did not even attempt to get consideration of their radical proposal. As Jefferson later recalled, in 1779 "the public mind would not yet bear the proposition."[10]

Unlike Jefferson, Professor Tucker was unafraid to introduce his plan for abolition in the Virginia House of Delegates. However, the legislature's prompt dismissal of Tucker's Dissertation on Slavery proves that even in 1796 "the public mind would not yet bear the proposition." Historian Robert McColley says that Tucker, who had no great political aspirations like those of Jefferson, "could afford to be more outspoken on the subject of slavery than men who

ran directly for public office, and especially men in national politics who wanted to keep the confidence of South Carolina and Georgia."[11]

The abolition proposals of both Jefferson and Tucker required that emancipation be carried out gradually and that those emancipated be excluded from white society. Jefferson's called for involuntary colonization, and Tucker's encouraged voluntary colonization. Both Jefferson and Tucker felt "that the blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstance, are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind."[12] For Jefferson and Tucker the blacks were incapable of assimilation into the free, white society of eighteenth century Virginia. However, they did not believe that inferiority could justify slavery, and they sincerely desired to see the abolition, initiated peacefully by the whites rather than violently by the blacks, of that morally evil institution. If Jefferson's and Tucker's views concerning the natural inferiority of blacks seem less than liberal today, their views concerning slavery itself were enlightened for their day.

Among eminent Virginians of the time, only George Wythe, the teacher of both Jefferson and Tucker, accepted the fact that blacks held the full attributes of humanity. Wythe had a direct concern for the black slaves which took precedence over the safety, convenience, or profit of their masters.[13] In a legal opinion submitted just before his death in 1806, Judge Wythe wrote that "whenever one person claims to hold another in slavery, the <u>onus probandi</u> lies on the claimant."[14] In other words, he ruled that the black man must be

considered free until proven a slave, and he based his decision on the Virginia Bill of Rights' guarantee of freedom as the birthright of every human being. The case was not settled until after Wythe's death, and the final decision was written by none other than Judge St. George Tucker, who disagreed with his mentor's reasoning. Tucker wrote that Wythe had been wrong "in his reasoning on the first clause of the Bill of Rights," which had been "notoriously framed with a cautious eye" to exclude blacks, and "not by a side wind to overturn the rights of property." Tucker's conclusion was even more firm: "This court /does not approve/ of the Chancellor's principles and reasoning in his decree...entirely disapproving thereof, so far as the same relates to native Africans and their descendants."[15]

Tucker's ambivalent response to slavery, his consideration of blacks as persons and his desire to free them juxtaposed with his consideration of blacks as property and his refusal to assimilate them into white society, was not unique among Virginia statesmen of the Jeffersonian era. What made Tucker unique was the fact that he did not let his ambivalent feelings prevent him from passionately and publicly proposing a practical plan for abolition. The history of anti-slavery sentiment in Jeffersonian Virginia is voluminous. Nearly every great Virginian of the Revolutionary generation was on record as favoring abolition.[16] Yet they refused to enact the emancipation of the blacks. In spite of the arguments of intellectuals, the lobbying of various Christian sects, the economic difficulties created by slavery, and the founding of the American Colonization

Society, Virginia politicians only talked about abolition up until 1832, and after that date they dismissed the idea of emancipation altogether.

The anti-slavery sentiment of late eighteenth century Virginia grew out of the libertarian ideals of the American Revolution, 1775-1783. The philosophy of natural and inalienable rights so dear to American patriots really allowed no room for the institution of slavery in America. St. George Tucker was by no means the first to perceive the complete incompatibility of slavery and democracy. The acknowledged leaders of the Revolution were outspoken against slavery for that very reason. Thomas Paine in his African Slavery in America pointed out the inconsistency between America's philosophy of freedom and her practice of slavery, and he called for the abolition of slavery or the abandonment of otherwise hypocritical declarations of liberty and justice for all.[17] John Dickinson in his A Serious Address to the Rulers of America did the same.[18] Benjamin Franklin, who became the President of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, declared in his Essay on the Slave Trade that slavery is an evil which robs man of his dignity and jeopardizes the very future of America.[19]

With the adoption of the doctrine of natural rights and other Lockean theories and with the growth of deistic thought, Jeffersonian Virginians, St. George Tucker being one, began thinking and writing about blacks and slavery.[20] Arthur Lee in his Essay in Vindication of the Colonies of America denounced slavery as being "repugnant to

justice...inconsistent with civil liberty.../and/ shocking to humanity."[21] In Patrick Henry's opinion slavery was unjustifiable, and in 1773 he wrote that it should be abolished in the near future.[22] James Madison proposed that slaves be freed and enlisted in the Continental Army.[23] Governor Randolph believed that any attempt to prevent the eventual abolition of slavery in Virginia would be a discredit to the commonwealth.[24]

In 1782 the Virginia General Assembly passed a law permitting private acts of manumission, provided the liberator remained responsible for any disabled blacks who might otherwise be burdens on the commonwealth.[25] As a result some 10,000 slaves were voluntarily freed in the Old Dominion between 1782 and 1792.[26] In 1783 the state legislature emancipated all slaves who served in the Continental Army. An act passed in 1787 legally recognized all private manumissions made prior to the 1782 law. In 1795 Virginia enacted a law allowing a slave to sue informa pauperis for his freedom; blacks claiming to be free were taken into the custody of the state, assigned free counsel, and allowed to come and go freely during the prosecution of the suit.[27]

In addition to the state leaders' denouncements of slavery and the state legislature's encouragement of private manumissions during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, many individual Virginia planters expressed their opposition to the institution of slavery. In the early 1790's Richard Randolph, the stepson of St. George Tucker, said that he never wanted a single slave for any purpose other than his "immediate liberation" and that he considered every

free black as "the source of future generations, not to say nations, of freemen."[28] In 1788 Peter Sublett of Powhatan County freed his slaves, saying that "all men are by nature Equally free and independent" and that it is morally wrong to deny human beings their "Natural and dearest right."[29] Similarly Charles Moorman of Powhatan County freed his slaves saying that he was "fully persuaded that freedom is the natural right of all mankind, and that no law...has given me a right to or property in the persons of my fellow creatures."[30]

Before the American Revolution the abolition of the slave trade was something that most Virginians ardently desired but something that the King of England continually disallowed. In 1774 citizens from Prince George, Hanover, and Surry Counties drew up petitions decrying slave trade as jeopardizing the entire future of Virginia.[31] George Mason felt that the abolition of the slave trade was one of the principal reasons for Virginia's entrance into the Revolutionary War.[32] Thomas Jefferson agreed with Mason. In his original draft of the Declaration of Independence Jefferson denounced King George of England for overriding Virginia's every proposal to end the slave trade. James Madison also called for an end to trade in human flesh.[33] After the American Revolution the slave trade was finally abolished in Virginia. The first session of the House of Delegates in 1778 forbade by law further importation of slaves into the Old Dominion.[34] Richard Henry Lee in his Address to the Virginia House of Burgesses expressed his belief that the abolition of the slave trade was the first step toward the abolition of slavery itself.[35] Jefferson

expressed the same belief in his Summary Review.[36]

There were civic groups on the national, state, and local level who actively sought the abolition of slavery itself. In 1790 members of the Virginia Abolition Society joined with their Pennsylvania counterparts in petitioning the United States Congress to abolish slavery.[37] On November 8, 1785, several citizens petitioned the Virginia General Assembly for an abolition law because they felt slavery was "an express violation of the principles upon which our government is founded; and that a general emancipation...would greatly contribute to strengthen /ing/ the state."[38] The Virginia Abolition Society made this same request of the state legislature in 1796. In 1797 the Alexandria Abolition Society brought before the local courts about twenty cases of slaves illegally held in bondage. From 1794 to 1809 Virginia sent delegates each year to the conventions of the National Anti-Slavery Society.[39]

Intellectuals of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries also helped to promote anti-slavery sentiment in America and in Virginia. European anthropologists like George Buffon in his Natural History, circulated in Virginia in the early 1770's, and Johann Blumenbach in his On the Nature and Variety of Mankind held that all men, regardless of race, are biologically equal and that slavery is a gross injustice to humanity.[40] Even Dr. Charles White, the English surgeon who classified blacks as one grade below whites in his Account of the Regular Gradation of Man, could not tolerate the institution of slavery.[41] In 1791 in his An Account

of a Person Born a Negro..Who Afterwards Became White Charles Willson Peale, the famous American painter, expressed his belief that skin color is only the effect of climate.[42] Charles Imlay expressed the same belief in his Topographical Description, and Imlay supported not only abolition but also interracial marriage.[43] The Reverend Samuel Stanhope Smith called black skin a "universal freckle" in his Essay on Slavery.[44] Noah Webster wrote out his anti-slavery arguments in 1793 in Effects of Slavery on Morals and Industry, copies of which were owned by Washington and Jefferson.[45] Dr. Benjamin Rush, the famous Philadelphia physician, penned his attack on slavery in Address on Slavery.[46] In 1822 Richard Harlan, founder of vertebrate paleontology in America, said that it is now "satisfactorily proven by modern zoologists, that all diversities of mankind are but varieties of one common stock."[47]

There were several talented blacks whose achievements during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries helped to promote the cause of their race. Benjamin Banneker, black mathematician and surveyor, assisted Andrew Ellicott in laying out the District of Columbia. After reading Banneker's almanac, Jefferson was so impressed that he began to change his views on black inferiority. Jefferson wrote to Banneker on August 30, 1791:

> Nobody wishes more than I do to see such proofs as you exhibit, that nature has given to our black brethren, talents equal to those of the other colors of men, and that the appearance of a want of them is owing merely to the degraded condition of their existence, both in Africa and America...I have taken the liberty of sending your Almanac to Monsieur de Condorcet, Secretary of the Academy of Sciences at Paris,...because I considered it as a document to which your whole colour had

> a right for their justification against the doubts which have been entertained of them.[48]

Other gifted blacks who made a name for themselves and their race were poet Jupiter Hammon, author Ignatius Sancho, and poetess Phyllis Wheatley.

Many white writers of the Jeffersonian era championed the cause of the black man in America. Many of the novels of John Davis, an Englishman who lived in Virginia between 1798 and 1817, are set in the Old Dominion and are anti-slavery.[49] Virginian George Fowler was editor of the 1810 novel Wandering Philantropist in which a travelling Chinaman observes the discrepancy between America's claims of liberty and Virginia's institution of slavery.[50] Daniel Bryan, a member of the Virginia General Assembly in 1820, also wrote pro-abolition literature.[51] Notes, on the Settlement and Indian Wars, of the Western Part of Virginia & Pennsylvania by Joseph Dodderidge and The Valley of the Shenandoah by George Tucker, a cousin of St. George Tucker, were two more anti-slavery books of the Jeffersonian era. James Heath portrayed the black man as hero in his Edge-Hill, or The Family of the Fitzroyals which was published in 1832. Heath's black hero saved his master's life, spied on Benedict Arnold, and planned attacks on the British troops.[52]

Various Christian sects were among the most active anti-slavery factions in eighteenth century Virginia. Baptists, Catholics, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Quakers were all officially opposed to slavery. Among Baptists John Leland who wrote Virginia Chronicle

in 1790 was one of the most outspoken against slavery.[53] David Barrow, the author in 1810 of Involuntary, Unmerited; Perpetual, Absolute, Hereditary Slavery Examined on the Principles of Nature, Reason, Justice, Policy and Scripture, was another articulate Baptist opponent of slavery.[54] The Methodist denomination published the Virginia Sentinel which maintained an anti-slavery stance.[55] Methodist Freeborn Garrettson published his pro-abolition piece, A Dialogue Between Do-Justice and Professing Christian, in 1820.[56] The Reverend Samuel Davies, a critic of slavery, was the most famous Virginia Presbyterian of the Jeffersonian era. Other important Presbyterian opponents of slavery were: David Rice, author of Slavery Inconsistent with Justice and Good Policy which was published in 1792;[57] George Browne, pastor at South River, Virginia, and author of The Book and Slavery Irreconcilable which was published in 1816;[58] John Paxton of Cumberland, Virginia, author of Letters on Slavery which was published in 1826;[59] David Ammen, publisher of John Rankin's Letters on American Slavery for distribution in Virginia.[60] In 1818 the Presbyterians started publishing the Virginia Evangelical and Literary Magazine which had a pro-abolition editorial policy.[61]

Of the various religious sects the Quakers were the most anti-slavery and pro-blacks of all. The 1773 Yearly Meeting of the Virginia Society of Friends resolved that slavery was an iniquity of which Quakers should wash their hands. In 1784 the Yearly Meeting decreed that any Friend who still owned slaves was to be disowned by the Society. Compared to Jefferson, Madison, St. George Tucker, Washington,

and the rest of the great statesmen, excepting George Wythe, who advocated emancipation, the Quakers were much more egalitarian. Like Wythe, the Friends had a direct concern for the black slaves which took precedence over the safety, convenience, or profit of their masters. The Quakers had faith in the power of moral energy to effect beneficial change, but the statesmen held to a gloomy set of fixed principles which man had no power to alter. To the statesmen the blacks were naturally hostile to the whites, but to the Quakers the blacks were capable of learning their own benevolent pacifism. The statesmen believed that the blacks were mentally inferior, but the Quakers used their meetinghouses as night schools for blacks. The statesmen, fearing miscegenation, argued that emancipation must be followed immediately by removal. The Friends argued that emancipation must take precedence over any other consideration, and if they feared miscegenation, they feared even more violating the golden rule in so wanton a way as the enslaving of another human. In their emancipation schemes the great statesmen always called for compensation for the masters. The Friends denied that there could be any property right in owning humans, and they believed that compensation was due the blacks who had been forced to work for others. The Quakers avowed their principles wherever they went and called for emancipation at once. The statesmen, with the possible exception of St. George Tucker, had to be politic, either waiting for a considerable show of public support for emancipation before taking a stand or making an advocacy for abolition

so conditional that no slaveholder could fear property loss.[62]

Many individual Quakers became articulate advocates of abolition. Daniel Mifflin, a Friend in Accomack County, freed his own one hundred slaves and frequently appeared in court on behalf of blacks held in bondage illegally. His son, Warner, freed his slaves in 1775, lobbied for emancipation in the Virginia Assembly, and helped draft the 1782 state manumission law.[63] Warner Mifflin also wrote anti-slavery pieces, such as A Serious Expostulation published in 1793 and Defense Against Aspersions published in 1796.[64] Robert Pleasants, a leading Quaker abolitionist of Jeffersonian Virginia, liberated eighty slaves in 1783 at a personal cost of 3,000 pounds sterling. Pleasants, who became President of the Virginia Abolition Society, established a school for blacks in Henrico County which operated from 1800 to 1824.[65] Pleasants drafted numerous anti-slavery petitions to both the Virginia General Assembly and the United States Congress while continuing privately to solicit the support of Henry, Jefferson, Madison, St. George Tucker, and Washington. Pleasants was especially vigorous in protesting some of the ideas set forth in Tucker's Dissertation on Slavery. Pleasants wrote the following to Professor Tucker on May 30, 1797:

> I much disapprove of thy proposition of prohibiting free Negroes and Mulattoes from holding estates in land, or other property, or to be restrained by law from contracting marriages with whites, disposing of property by will, or enjoying other rights of citizens.... labouring people are not only the riches of every country, but... with suitable encouragement and proper instruction /they might/ act so as to contribute to the peace, happiness, and prosperity of the country, as well as other citizens.[66]

Pleasants felt that the measures designed by Tucker to drive the blacks away were ill-advised because they would maintain prejudices against blacks and because it would be better for everyone if the blacks did not leave at all. Other important Virginia Quakers who wrote against slavery were John Hampden Pleasants, founder and editor of the Richmond Whig, and Samuel Janney, contributor to the Richmond Whig and the Alexandria Gazette.

The man who set the example for Pleasants, Mifflin, and other Virginia Friends was Quaker Anthony Benezet of Philadelphia, the city of brotherly love. Benezet was a most prolific writer of anti-slavery material, and his pamphlets were widely read in Virginia, notably by Patrick Henry and George Washington. In his A Serious Address to the Rulers of America (1783) Benezet wrote:

> If we continually bear in mind the royal law of doing to others as we would be done by, we shall never think of bereaving our fellow creatures of that valuable blessing, liberty, nor endure to grow rich by their bondage.[67]

Benezet was so successful with his evening classes for young blacks that he secured the endowment of America's first full-time school for that race. Prodded by Benezet and John Woolman, author of Some Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes, the Pennsylvania Friends voted in 1776 that none of their members should keep slaves, and they secured in 1780 a law for the gradual emancipation of all Pennsylvania blacks.[68]

Aside from moral reasons, many Jeffersonians were convinced that slavery was economically wrong, that it was the root of Virginia's

economic problems. Of course lack of industry, waning demand, and soil exhaustion were also responsible for the Old Dominion's financial slump, but most theorists of the day placed all the blame on slavery. Among the Virginia planters who considered slavery economically unsound were Mr. Carter of Nomini Hall, George Washington, George Mason, and John Randolph.[69] The Agricultural Society of Northern Neck and the Agricultural Society of Rockingham both opposed slavery for economic reasons.[70] The arguments of these planters and these agricultural groups were derived from Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations which was published in 1776. Smith said that it is "the experience of all ages and nations that work done by freemen comes cheaper in the end than that performed by slaves."[71] In 1820 Governor Randolph, addressing the opening session of the General Assembly, spoke of emancipation as an economic necessity.[72] Many of Virginia's newspapers, among them the Richmond Enquirer, the Virginia Sentinel, the Portsmouth Journal, and the Staunton Spectator, made economic reasons for emancipation available to the public.[73] As a result there was a wave of private manumissions in the 1820's in Virginia. Charles Ewell of Prince William County liberated his slaves in 1823; John Smith of Sussex County liberated his in 1825; John Ward of Pittsylvannia County freed his in 1826; George Smith of Powhatan County released his in 1830.[74]

The two major deterrents to abolition in Virginia were the fact that many slaveholders considered their slaves as property which they refused to lose and the fact that the majority of Virginians were

unwilling to permit nearly a half million improverished, uneducated, possibly hostile blacks to wander throughout the state at will. The American Colonization Society, founded in 1816, thought it had the solution in coupling abolition with colonization, an idea similar in part to the ones expounded decades before by Thomas Jefferson and St. George Tucker. Property rights would be protected because manumissions were to be voluntary, and the white population would be protected because freed slaves were to be shipped to Africa. From a twentieth century vantage point it is obvious that the Society's plan was doomed from the start; it was entirely too expensive to ship thousands of blacks to Africa, and it was entirely too difficult to maintain settlements on the African coast even after they were established. Nevertheless, between 1816 and 1832 the American Colonization Society received support from all over the Old Dominion and during those years must be considered a success. The Society and its auxiliaries were on record as working toward gradual but complete emancipation, and the great majority of its members were ardent abolitionists. The society was endorsed by the Baptists, Episcopalians, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Quakers. It received favorable treatment in the Richmond Enquirer, Norfolk Herald, Central Gazette of Charlottesville, Lynchburg Virginian, Staunton Spectator, and Norfolk Beacon.

What precipitated the end of anti-slavery activity in Virginia was the black rebellion at Southampton in August, 1831. There had been slave insurrections before, the Gabriel Insurrection in 1800

and the Boxley Insurrection in 1815, but none were as successful as the 1831 one. Led by black preacher Nat Turner, the rebels at Southampton murdered fifty-seven white men. Afterwards slavery became the main topic of debate in the Virginia General Assembly. The famous debates of 1831-1832 were on. Governor John Floyd supported abolition. So did a majority of the delegates, but they were unable to decide on any concrete program of statewide emancipation. Should it be immediate or gradual? Total or conditional? They were unable to resolve these and other details. Finally in desperation, the House adopted, sixty-five to fifty-eight, a proposal by Mr. Bryce of Goochland County which in effect tabled the whole issue. This marked the climax of the abolition movement in the Old Dominion. Virginia, by seven votes, was never to free voluntarily her slaves.[76]

Abolition failed in Virginia for several reasons, the most important of which was inertia. Slavery was inextricably bound to the way of Southern life, and Virginians resisted change. They knew, for the most part, that slavery was morally wrong, but they knew also that to destroy slavery would be to destroy their Southern heritage. So they rationalized their guilt as inherited. They had not brought slaves to America; their forefathers had. Resisting change, the Jeffersonians sat tight. After Nat Turner's Rebellion, emancipation was not openly discussed for fear of more insurrections. By the early 1830's Virginia began to react against Northern radicals, especially against Garrison and his The Liberator. Ante-bellum Virginians found themselves actually defending slavery.[77]

St. George Tucker's place in the history of Jeffersonian anti-slavery sentiment is significant. His place in the history of Southern letters, though perhaps not as significant, is certainly important. As a poet, Tucker wrote nearly two hundred poems, most of which were merely circulated among his friends. However, in 1796, under the pseudonym of "Jonathan Pindar," he published a volume of satires entitled The Probationary Odes of Jonathan Pindar, Esq. A Cousin of Peter's. Tucker left some manuscript plays and much verse. One of his lyrics, "Resignation, or Days of My Youth," has been widely anthologized. Tucker also left the manuscripts of twenty-two epistolary essays. These holographs are now a part of the Tucker-Coleman Collection in the Earl Gregg Swem Library of the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia. All of these twenty-two essays were apparently meant to be contributions to his friend William Wirt's collaborative newspaper column, "The Old Bachelor," which appeared in the Richmond Enquirer between December 22, 1810, and December 24, 1811. Tucker's essays, headed "For the old Batchellor," were written between 1811 and 1813 in an attempt to get Wirt to continue the column. One of these essays, numbered "26," is on benevolence and slavery. It is of particular interest because it deals with the same general subject as his Dissertation on Slavery, only in a belletristic form and some seventeen years later. Following is a critical edition of Tucker's essay on benevolence and slavery. In an effort to be as true to the original as possible, no changes have been made in the text. The typescript

is an exact transcription of Tucker's holograph. British spellings and variant spellings listed as acceptable in the Oxford English Dictionary have not been annotated. Only misspellings have been indicated, by [sic].

Notes to Introduction

[1]Biographical information concerning St. George Tucker is available in Mary Haldane Coleman's St. George Tucker: Citizen of No Mean City, in Dictionary of American Biography, and in the unpublished Ph.D. dissertations of Charles T. Cullen, William S. Prince, and Percy Winfield Turrentine (see bibliography). Dr. Cullen's dissertation is the source of the brief biographical sketch of Tucker which begins this thesis.

[2]Charles T. Cullen, "St. George Tucker and Law in Virginia 1772-1804," Diss. University of Virginia 1971, p. 212.

[3]Richard Beale Davis, Intellectual Life in Jefferson's Virginia, 1790-1330 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1964), p. 413.

[4]Quoted in Robert McColley, Slavery and Jeffersonian Virginia (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964), p. 135.

[5]St. George Tucker, A Dissertation on Slavery with a Proposal for the Gradual Abolition of It in the State of Virginia (Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1796), pp. 9-10.

[6]Ibid., pp. 77-82.

[7]Ibid., pp. 85-86.

[8]Ibid., pp. 91-96.

[9]Thomas Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia, ed. William Peden (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1955), pp. 137-138.

[10]Ibid., p. 286.

[11]McColley, p. 132.

[12]Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia, p. 143. Quoted in Tucker, Dissertation on Slavery, p. 87.

[13]McColley, p. 136.

[14]Helen T. Catterall, ed., Judicial Cases Concerning Slavery and the Negro, Vol. I (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institute of Washington, 1926), p. 112.

[15]Ibid., Vol. I, p. 112. In this case (Hudgins v. Wrights) Tucker agreed with Wythe's decision to free the Wrights, but he disagreed with Wythe's use of the Bill of Rights in doing so.

[16]Davis, p. 411.

[17]Dwight Lowell Dumond, Antislavery - The Crusade for Freedom in America (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1961), p. 19.

[18]Mary Staughton Locke, Anti-Slavery in America - From the Introduction of African Slaves to the Prohibition of the Slave Trade 1619-1808 (Boston: Ginn Co., 1901), p. 61.

[19]Ibid., p. 57.

[20]Davis, p. 411.

[21]Quoted in William Sumner Jenkins, Pro-Slavery Thought in the Old South (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1960), p. 27.

[22]Beverley B. Munford, Virginia's Attitude Toward Slavery and Secession (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1909), p. 83.

[23]Carter Godwin Woodson, The Negro in Our History (Washington, D.C.: Associated Publishers, Inc., 1922), p. 124.

[24]Ezra B. Chase, Teachings of the Patriots and Statesmen, or, The "Founders of the Republic" on Slavery (Philadelphia: J.W. Bradley, 1860), p. 140.

[25]James Curtis Ballagh, A History of Slavery in Virginia (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1902), p. 120.

[26]Workers of the Writers' Program of the W.P.A. in the State of Virginia, The Negro in Virginia (New York: Hastings House, 1940), pp. 113-114. Hereafter cited simply as The Negro in Virginia.

[27]Ballagh, pp. 121-123.

[28]Quoted in Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, American Negro Slavery (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1959), p. 426.

[29]Quoted in "Notes and Queries," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, LVI (October, 1956), pp. 348-9.

[30]Munford, p. 105.

[31]Jenkins, p. 31.

[32]Chase, p. 129.

[33]Munford, pp. 33-34.

[34]Jefferson, p. 87.

[35]Francis Coleman Rosenberger, ed., Virginia Reader: A Treasury of Writings (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1948), p. 249.

[36]Jenkins, p. 31.

[37]Chase, p. 180.

[38]Journal of the Virginia House of Delegates, November 8, 1785.

[39]Alice Dana Adams, The Neglected Period of Anti-Slavery in America 1808-1832 (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1934), p. 154.

[40]Thomas F. Gossett, Race, the History of an Idea in America (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1963), pp. 36, 39.

[41]Ibid., p. 50.

[42]William Stanton, The Leopard's Spots - Scientific Attitudes Toward Race in America 1815-1859 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 199.

[43]Gilbert Imlay, A Topographical Description of the Western Territory of North America (London: J. Debrett, 1793), p. 204-205.

[44]Samuel Stanhope Smith, An Essay on Slavery (Philadelphia: J. Simpson and Co., 1810), p. 191.

[45]Allan Merrill Brown, "Neglected Abolitionism in Jeffersonian Virginia," Honors Thesis College of William and Mary 1967, p. 3.

[46]Locke, p. 56.

[47]Quoted in Stanton, p. 10.

[48]Jefferson, p. 287.

[49]Davis, p. 302.

[50]Adams, p. 30.

[51]Ibid., p. 21.

[52]Davis, pp. 274, 307, 309.

[53]Ibid., p. 412.

[54]The Negro in Virginia, p. 99.

[55]Charles Baumer Swaney, Episcopal Methodism and Slavery (Boston: Gorham Press, 1926), pp. 45-46.

[56]Donald G. Mathews, Slavery and Methodism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), p. 54.

[57]Dumond, p. 61.

[58]Davis, p. 412.

[59]Adams, p. 18.

[60]Dumond, p. 135.

[61]Davis, p. 134.

[62]McColley, pp. 157-158.

[63]Ibid., p. 155.

[64]Thomas Drake, Quakers and Slavery in America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), p. 108.

[65]McColley, p. 157.

[66]Quoted in Ibid., p. 159.

[67]Jenkins, p. 11.

[68]McColley, pp. 154-155.

[69]See Phillips, pp. 150, 391 and Dumond, p. 28.

[70]Richmond Enquirer, November 23, 1819, and May 30, 1820.

[71]Quoted in Sir Reginald Coupland, The British Anti-Slavery Movement (London: Frank Cass and Co., 1933), pp. 57-58.

[72]Journal of the Virginia House of Delegates, December 4, 1820.

[73]Brown, pp. 31-32.

[74]Davis, p. 414.

[75]Brown, pp. 33-41.

[76]Ibid., pp. 43-48.

[77]Ibid., pp. 49-50.

For the old Batchellor.

26.

Sir,

Benevolence, or that universal Sentiment of Humanity, and tenderness, which teaches us to regard the whole human race as our Brethren, and to feel for their distresses the same compassion, which, under a change of circumstances, we should wish to be felt for our own; and to do, as far as is in our power, everything for their relief, which we ourselves could ask, or desire, were we under the like Calamity, appears to be that character of the human heart, which is probably most acceptable to our bountiful, and merciful Creator. Let us appeal to our own hearts for this truth: Which of us that has ever been overtaken by Misfortune, or threatened with Danger, has faild [sic] to implore the divine mercy &[1] relief? From whence, is this instantaneous appeal made to the goodness of our Creator, if we were not well persuaded that Benevolence is among the first, and most important of his Attributes, as they relate to Man? Can we then suppose that a disposition in our Creator so essential to our happiness, even in this Life, can be either unnecessary, or beneath the Attention of the mere Creature? If Religion teaches us to endeavour to conform to the Will of God, is not the true meaning of the precept that we shall, as far as our nature is capable of so doing, copy after his perfections? Dare we then[2] presume that we serve God, when we cease to love our neighbour?[3] Or, when we do

him an Injury, or even an act of mere unkindness, that we do unto him, as we would he should do unto us?[4] The moral Evil which Wars, Ambition, Rivalship, the thirst of power, and desire of conquest, among nations, have introduced into the world, is by no means confined to[5] nations, or Societies at large. All these great Evils, upon the great Scale of nations, have their influence over the conduct of the individual, as it respects other individuals of his Species.[6] The love of Empire has it's /sic/ humble representative in the desire of extensive possessions; the Desire of Dominion, is not more vehement in the breast of an Alexander, or a Napoleon, than in that of a feudal Baron, or a modern Landlord, surrounded by his hundred Tenants; or a Virginia Planter proud of the possession of double that number of Slaves, and ten times as much Land as the whole of them could cultivate to advantage.[7] The latter is as likely to forget the natural equality of Mankind, as the former is unattentive to the political equality of Nations. Power is Law,[8] in both Cases, too often, without <u>any</u>, and always, without a <u>just</u> regard to fundamental principles; since every exercise of power, beyond that which the Law of native authorites /sic/, or under special Circumstances justifies, at least, is in a moral light condemnable. The first introduction of personal slavery, probably took its rise from the number of captives taken in battle, or the submission of some weak and defenceless nation, to their more warlike & tyrannical neighbours. If it had its rise in the humane desire of sparing the blood of those who were taken prisoners in War, on Condition of serving their Conquerors, as a retribution for sparing

their lives, some apology might be offered for it in the early ages of Mankind, when the principles of civilization were not well understood. But what excuse can be offered in behalf of those, who being separated by an immense ocean from a race of men, from whom it is in the nature of things impossible that they should ever have recieved [sic] an Injury, fan the flames of War between them, that they might avail themselves of the opportunity of reducing the miserable captives, made on both sides, to their own arbitrary subjection? It is I concieve [sic] impossible to represent human nature under a more maglignant [sic] Aspect, than they deserve, who have acted thus, or than that Government deserves, by which such Conduct was encouraged, or promoted. Nor are they wholly exempt from some share of this reproach, who have so far been accessary to this infernal proceedure, as to purchase the unhappy victims when brought hither for sale.[9] Some apology, and even a very favourable one, may be offered for many who engaged in this practice. The lands required to be opened in order to Cultivation:[10] labourers were wanting, and could not be otherwise procured; the wretched victims themselves were probably in such a situation as to render a release from their infernal prison, desirable upon any terms; and no doubt many of them experienced a more humane treatment, than they had been accustomed to, even in their own Country, where a great proportion of them, it appears, are held in the most abject Slavery. An humane Master would by such unfortunate Beings be regarded, as in fact he would be, a great Benefactor. It therefore by no means follows, in my Opinion,

that a Slave holder in this Country is a Tyrant. Nor ought it ever to be forgotten, that among the first Acts of our republican-government, was an absolute prohibition to the further introduction of Slaves, directly, or indirectly, from any foreign Country, whatever;[11] and to our credit beit /sic/ spoken, I believe no Man in Virginia would be hardy enough (even if we had the power to do so) to make a motion in the Legislature for the repeal of that Law. Still, however, the Evil of Slavery remains among us, and has taken such deep root, that like a Cancer in the human body, I fear it can never be effectually extirpated. The moral Evil, as it affects the Mind of the master, is in many instances diminished, and the treatment of Slaves in such Cases is infinitely more humane, than before the revolution.[12] The Sentiment of Liberty, which has gained strength since the commencement of that period, has no doubt contributed greatly to this happy reform, in a great number of Cases. But we may be permitted to doubt, whether the Evil is not as great in a large proportion, perhaps, even a Majority of Cases; and even where it is most lessened, whether it does not fall infinitely short of that Scale of Humanity, and Benevolence, which ought to be observed by Man, in his Conduct towards his fellow creature. My neighbour, Major Opulent,[13] has a very large estate, both where he resides, and in two or three distant Counties. At his home plantation his Slaves are all very well cloathed, abundantly supplied with good, and wholesome provisions, and, except in the summer, and fall months, they are in general healthy. But he always makes it a point of having,

what is called, a smart Overseer, whose duty it is to keep them tightly to their work. That is, the negroes are to be in the fields at the first dawn, of the day, and at their work, as soon as they can see to do any thing, in dark nights, when there is no moonshine; but, when the moon shines the latter part of the night, they must be at work before three OClock [sic], in summer, and before four in winter. And when the moon shines in the Evening, they are to continue at work until nine o-Clock [sic], except in the Tobacco-season, when they are not dismissed until eleven. This he seems to think is no more than they can do, & ought to do, though he is generally allowed to be an active, stirring man, himself, but never rises earlier than five oClock, even in summer, and generally goes to bed between nine, and ten. ---Scarce a month passes that he is not visited by one, or two negroes from his distant plantations with some complaint or other against the Overseer, such as over severe chastisement, the want of a due allowance of vcituals [sic], or the want of cloaths, which have not been made up for them, though provided by their master; but it always happens that the Overseer is either justified, or excused. ---By and bye, this class of men are generally very unfeeling: I recollect staying at the house of a very particular friend in the Country once, about midsummer, when I had a long Journey to take the next day, & made a point of setting out early, to avoid the heat. My Servant called me a few minutes after day break: I rose, and looking out of the window saw a negroe woman whose appearance indicated that she was advanced in a state of pregnancy, walking tolerably fast towards the Corn field:

she was presently met by her overseer, who gave her at least half a dozen severe stripes over the shoulders by way of quickening her pace. I can not well describe the shock I felt at this wanton act of inhumanity. Yet I found this fellow was not under a bad character for his Ill-treatment of Slaves. On the contrary I believe his Employer supposed him to be as unexceptionable, on that Account, as any other to be met with. Otherwise I am fully assured he never would have employed him, or retaind him in his Service, for he was, himself, one of the best of men, & knew nothing of the Case of the poor Woman.

Such Conduct surely can not stand the test of either Humanity, or even the remotest regard to Justice, if we consider this unfortunate race of men, as by nature our equals. Much is it to be desired that their Condition could be softened, and especially that the practices of unfeeling overseers towards them should be checkt, not only by their employers, but by the public Sentiment, and the laws of the Land. ---However tender, our legislature may be, of interfering with the rights of the <u>owner</u> of a Slave, certainly these petty tyrants, by whose hands those unhappy Beings are incessantly tormented, and in not a few instances have been actually murdered with a wanton barbarity, have no claim to favor, or exemption from Punishment when they violate the bounds of <u>necessary</u> and meritted[14] Chastisement, and set at nought the precepts of Humanity.

"My Ear is paind,
"My Soul is sick with every day's report
"Of wrong and outrage, with which earth is fill'd.

"There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart,
"It does not feel for man. The nat'ral Bond
"Of Brotherhood is sever'd as the flax
"That falls asunder at the touch of Fire.
"He finds his fellow guilty of a Skin
"Not colour'd like his own, and having pow'r
"T'inforce the wrong, for such a worthy Cause.
"Dooms, and devotes him as his lawful prey.
"And worse than all, and most to be deplored,
"As human nature's broadest, foulest blot,
"Chains him, and tacks him, and exacts his sweat,
"With stripes, that mercy with a bleeding heart,
"Weeps when she sees inflicted on a Beast."

Coopers Tucke.[15]

I wish, Sir, that you would favor your readers with something from your own pen on this truly interesting, and important subject. For I fear that unless we are sometimes reminded that our unfortunate Slaves are our fellow creatures, our hearts may in time become obdurate, and callous to the Sentiments of Humanity, and Benevolence, even in our Intercourse with our[16] fellow Citizens, and equals, and possibly with our dearest friends, and families.

Yours
Philanthropus[17]

E. Motto recommended for this number.

Homo sum,
Et humani nihil a me alienum puto. Terence.

Myself a Man; from my own heart I find,
That touches me, which touches human kind. Anon:[18]

Notes to Essay 26

[1]Occasionally Tucker uses the ampersand (&) instead of writing out the word "and." Tucker's use of the ampersand is faithfully reproduced here in this typescript.

[2]Tucker inserts "then" via a caret in the manuscript.

[3]"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" is a recurring Biblical command: Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 19:19, 22:39, Mark 12:31, Lucke 10:27, Romans 13:9, Galatians 5:14, and James 2:8.

[4]Explicit allusion to Matthew 7:12 (also Luke 6:31): "whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." The first sentence of this essay is an implicit allusion to this same Bliblical verse.

[5]Tucker inserts "to" via a caret in the manuscript.

[6]The macrocosm-microcosm relationship described here (i.e., national moral evil resulting in and corresponding with individual moral evil) is similar to the Elizabethan concept, and in a moral sense Tucker's "great Scale of nations" is analogous to the Elizabethan "Great Chain of Being."

[7]Perhaps Tucker's "Virginia Planter" is Robert "King" Carter (1663-1732), colonial official and landholder. A prominent member of the Virginia Assembly, "King" Carter was its speaker in 1696 and 1699; a member of the Council from 1699 to 1732, he was its president from 1726 to 1732. He was agent for the Fairfax family, proprietors of the "Northern Neck," from 1702 to 1711 and from 1722 to 1732. At his death he was one of the wealthiest of colonials, leaving more than three hundred thousand acres of land, one thousand slaves, and ten thousand pounds.

[8]"Power is law" could be an echo of any number of sources. As early as the thirteenth century Walter von der Vogelweide (1160-1230) in his Millennium wrote "Might is right."

[9]When Tucker speaks of those "separated by an immense ocean" who "fan the flames of War" between African tribes so "that they might avail themselves of the opportunity of reducing the miserable captives, made on both sides, to their own arbitrary subjection," he is referring to European slave traders. And those who "purchase the unhappy victims when brought hither" refers to American slave buyers. Tucker deals with this same issue on pp. 25-30 of his published Dissertation on Slavery.

[10]Tucker probably meant to write "cultivate" here instead of "Cultivation."

[11]U.S. Constitution, Article I, Section 9, Paragraph 1: "The migration or importation of such persons as any of the States now existing shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by the Congress prior to the year one thousand eight hundred and eight, but a tax or duty may be imposed on such importation, not exceeding ten dollars for each person."

This act is really not the "absolute prohibition to the further introduction of Slaves" that Tucker would have it to be. Drafted in 1787, this provision of the constitution allows for a twenty-one year period of grace in which slave trade will not be prohibited by Congress; after 1808 Congress will have the power to prohibit slave trade.

Instead of being the Federal government, Tucker's "our republican-government" may refer to the Virginia General Assembly which passed its own law in 1778 prohibiting the importation of slaves into Virginia.

[12]The American Revolutionary War (1775-1783).

[13]"Major Opulent," besides being an allegorical figure, could be any one of a number of Tucker's acquaintances.

[14]Tucker inserts "meritted" [sic] via a caret in the manuscript.

[15]Signed "Coopers Tucke," this poem is actually lines 5-15 and 21-25 of The Task, Book II or "The Time-Piece," by William Cowper (1731-1800). An 1810 edition of Cowper's Poems, published in Baltimore by P.H. Nicklin & Co., is in the Tucker-Coleman Collection of the Earl Gregg Swem Library at The College of William and Mary. It is not possible to say for certain, but this 1810 edition may have belonged to St. George Tucker. At any rate it is certain that Tucker was at least familiar with Cowper's Task.

[16]Tucker inserts "our" via a caret in the manuscript.

[17]Each of Tucker's letters to the "Old Bachelor" is signed with various Latinized names such as "Philanthropus," with the letter "Z," or with more common pen names such as "Moses Dolittle." The meaning of "Philanthropus" here is obvious. However, the letter "E" appearing in the bottom left-hand corner, next to the recommended motto, is less easy to explain. Further research may prove that it is related to a similar use of letters in the essays appearing in the Spectator (1711-1712) or, as Anne Elizabeth McCorkle's M.A. thesis (see bibliography) suggests, in the Monitor Essays appearing in the Virginia Gazette 1736-1737).

[18]The lines from Terence are from Heautontimorumenos, Act I, Sc. 1, 25- (Chremes). Tucker provides an anonymous English translation below the Latin quotation. Terence was born in Carthage, probably to parents who were members of some African tribe, and he was the slave of the Roman senator Terentius Lucanus who educated him and then freed him in Rome.

CRITICAL COMMENTARY

St. George Tucker and William Wirt became intimate friends when the latter moved to Williamsburg.[1] Wirt came to that city in November, 1802, as judge of the new Williamsburg district of Virginia's Chancery Court, but he left about a year later to enter private law practice in Norfolk.[2] In spite of their separation, Tucker and Wirt, exchanging letters on personal, political, and literary matters, continued their friendship through correspondence. Wirt did not remain long in Norfolk either. He moved to Richmond in 1806 and to Washington, D.C., in 1817. But wherever he was, Wirt continued to consult Tucker on literary matters. In fact, as long as Tucker lived, Wirt sought his advice and his criticism.[3]

As a writer Wirt was primarily interested in the familiar essay. He published anonymously a series of ten such essays in the Richmond Virginia Argus during August and September of 1803. A few months later these ten essays were collected and republished, still anonymously, in book form as The Letters of the British Spy. The Spy was extremely popular. The tenth edition of it appeared in 1832 with the author's name given for the first time. A London edition of the Spy came out in 1812, and an imitation, "The British Spy in Boston," appeared in the Port Folio from November, 1804, through January, 1805. Almost immediately after the Spy first appeared, Wirt and nine other men formed the Rainbow Association,

a group of Virginians whose avocation was essay-writing. Each member of the Association contributed essays to the Richmond Enquirer which published their work between August 11 and October 20, 1804. Thomas Ritchie, a member of the Association and editor of the Enquirer, immediately republished in book form the first ten "Rainbow" essays as The Rainbow; First Series. Apparently Ritchie's book sold so poorly that he did not republish the later "Rainbow" essays. Poor sales might be explained by the fact that Richmond was a Federalist stronghold and the Rainbow Association was a Republican group.[4]

Wirt's best familiar essays were those which he contributed to "The Old Bachelor," his own collaborative newspaper column. Wirt began "The Old Bachelor" in November, 1810, after abandoning his Enquirer column known as "The Sylph," a short-lived series he soon found unmanageable. Twenty-eight of the "Old Bachelor" essays, written by Wirt and perhaps a half dozen of his friends, were published in the Enquirer from December 22, 1810, to December 24, 1811. In 1814 these twenty-eight essays plus five more were collected and reprinted in book form in Richmond, and in 1818 a so called "third edition" of The Old Bachelor was published in Baltimore. Wirt always intended to add more essays to the last edition, but he never did.[5]

The "Old Bachelor" essays were didactic and ethical pieces modeled somewhat after the Spectator and other works of that type. John Pendleton Kennedy, the biographer of Wirt, writes of the "Old Bachelor" essays, "It is not too much to say of these essays,

that they may be compared, without disparagement, with the best of those of Addison and Steele."[6] The announced Addisonian aim of the "Old Bachelor" series was "virtuously to instruct, or innocently amuse." Originally the subject of these essays was to have been eloquence, but only a few pieces near the end of the series dealt with that subject. As it turned out, education was the principal topic, but Wirt and his collaborators grew tired of that topic long before they had adequately discussed it. They went on to discuss new and different subjects, such as avarice, gambling, manners, oratory, and patriotism. The major theme which runs throughout the series is "Virginia in decline." The Old Bachelor is actually addressed to youth, who lack the "sublime enthusiasm" of the past, as an exhortation to study seriously in order to revitalize Virginia's fading greatness.[7]

The Old Bachelor of the series' title is one Dr. Robert Cecil, a character who is vaguely reminiscent of Addison's Mr. Spectator. Wirt himself assumed the persona of Dr. Cecil, the Old Bachelor who is characterized by enthusiasm, sentiment, and moral purpose. Those essays not written by Dr. Cecil are usually in the form of letters addressed to him. The Old Bachelor's correspondents include "Obadiah Squaretoes," a persona assumed by Dabney Carr; "Galen," a persona assumed by Dr. Frank Carr; "Alfred," a persona assumed by Richard E. Parker; and "Melmoth," a persona assumed by Dr. Louis Hue Girardin. John Pendleton Kennedy states that St. George Tucker, David Watson, and George Tucker also contributed epistolary essays which appeared in Wirt's "Old Bachelor" series.[8]

However, Kennedy's statement cannot be completely substantiated. Although St. George Tucker submitted essays to Wirt for publication in the "Old Bachelor" series, none of the thirty-three published "Old Bachelor" essays has been positively identified as being the work of St. George Tucker.

Wirt's personal letters to St. George Tucker reveal that he obviously liked Tucker's intended contributions to "The Old Bachelor" and that he apparently had every intention of publishing them. Tucker first submitted essays to the Enquirer series in the summer of 1811, and Wirt was very pleased with them. On August 7, 1811, Wirt wrote to Tucker:

> I have recieved /sic/ your elegant communications for the O.B. for which I beg you to recieve my thanks. They shall all have a place.... I am very glad your spirits have taken this turn, and in so fine a walk, which, indeed, seems natural to them, I hope they will not weary.[9]

In the same letter Wirt indicated that Tucker's essays would be published not in the first volume of The Old Bachelor, which was to come out in the winter of 1811, but in a second volume, which was then in the planning. Wirt wrote:

> Ritchie /Thomas Ritchie, editor of the Enquirer/ says that he will not bind up more than thirty numbers in the first volume which is to come out by the winter. He has already five and twenty in hand, and I have two or three others prepared for him: so that you see I am bespeaking material for the second volume, as it becomes a good.../illegible word/ to do. I shall be not a little proud to be bound up with you in the same volume and I cannot help flattering myself that we may be of some service in the country.[10]

Throughout August of 1811 Tucker continued to send essays to Wirt, and the latter continued to encourage the former. Wirt, at Tucker's

suggestion, even decided to attempt to persuade Ritchie to enlarge the first volume of The Old Bachelor, making it large enough to include Tucker's contributions.[11]

As it turned out, the first volume of The Old Bachelor, although enlarged to thirty-three numbers, did not include Tucker's essays, was the only volume, and did not come out until 1814. Several events in Wirt's personal life combined to halt "The Old Bachelor" Enquirer column on December 24, 1811, and to delay the publication of the first, and only, volume of The Old Bachelor. In the fall of 1811 Wirt suffered what he described as a "nervous fever." After his recovery he was prevented from continuing his literary avocation first by a significant increase in his professional responsibilities and then by the ill health of his wife and children. Unaware of these reasons for delay, Tucker, who had waited in vain for the publication of his essays and who supposed that his friend had abandoned the O.B. altogether, wrote to Wirt in August of 1812 and requested that he return the manuscripts Tucker had sent him one year ago. Wirt responded that as soon as his wife and youngest child regained their health he intended to resume immediately "The Old Bachelor."[12] In that case Tucker permitted Wirt to retain his manuscripts. However, should the "Old Bachelor" ever be discontinued permanently, Tucker wrote, "I must request the return of the essays in question, as I have no copy of any of them."[13]

By September of 1813 Tucker had given up hope of Wirt's continuing "The Old Bachelor." It had been more than two years

since Tucker had first sent essays, none of which had been printed, to the O.B.; more than eighteen months since "The Old Bachelor" had last appeared in the Enquirer; more than eighteen months since volume one of The Old Bachelor, as yet unpublished, was to have been published. In a letter dated September 12, 1813, Tucker asked Wirt to return two of his essays because he planned to include them in a new project, a proposed replacement for the long silent "Old Bachelor." Tucker explained:

> I have serious thoughts of proposing to you to let me kill him /Dr. Cecil, the Old Bachelor/, with a paraletic /sic/ stroke next winter, and to revive & continue the publication under the title the Hermit of the Mountain, whom I propose to make his Legatee, as far as his papers go. If you would join me in this project, in the mind I am in at present, we might carry it on in concert under this new title, until we should finish at least a couple of Volumes. All the numbers which you contribute, and all that I have written with a view to the old Batchellor /sic/, might be offered as papers found in his Escritoire, & c. & c. When we meet again we will talk over this subject more at large.[14]

Wirt's continuing reluctance to revive "The Old Bachelor" prompted Tucker to take it upon himself to do so, but under a new title, "The Hermit of the Mountain." On October 10, 1813, Wirt wrote to Tucker to say that he would search for the requested essays and that he would contribute what he could to Tucker's new scheme.[15] However, by that date Tucker himself had abandoned the scheme.

Tucker began working on "The Hermit of the Mountain" on September 13, 1813, the day after he wrote Wirt concerning it, and he stopped working on it, never to return, on September 27, 1813. Tucker began the writing of his proposed replacement for "The Old

Bachelor" in a notebook. In the notebook's first essay Tucker assumed the persona of the Hermit and explained in a first person narrative that he was the legatee of the manuscripts of his deceased friend, the Old Bachelor. The Hermit then introduced his plan to use and to add to his inheritance in order to revive and continue the publication started by the late Dr. Robert Cecil. Tucker wrote a second essay in the notebook which he intended to follow with those unpublished essays he had written for Wirt's newspaper column. However, the death of his beloved daughter Frances Coalter on September 27, 1813, recorded on page eighteen of the notebook, brought an abrupt and complete end to "The Hermit of the Mountain." Later Tucker used the remainder of the notebook as a scrapbook for his verses and his study of astronomy.[16]

The twenty-two unpublished epistolary essays "For the old Batchellor," now among the manuscripts in the Tucker-Coleman Collection, were apparently ones which Tucker desired to publish first in Wirt's "The Old Bachelor" and then in his own proposed "The Hermit of the Mountain." Just as it was not unusual for a lawyer in the Jeffersonian era, like St. George Tucker, to be also a writer, so too it was not unusual for an essayist in the Jeffersonian era to seek publication in newspapers and periodicals. Most of the novels, short stories, essays, poems, and histories printed in Tucker's day were written by members of the professional classes, lawyers, physicians, clergymen, journalists, and teachers. Many of these writers, particularly those who wrote fiction, published anonymously

or pseudonymously in order to avoid gaining the damaging reputation of idleness which might be attributed to one who took out time from his professional duties to write. Because of the high cost of printing and of printed material many poets and essayists published in the inexpensive and widely circulated newspapers. By the early nineteenth century the newspaper essay was a well established form in America. Series of Addisonian essays appeared in colonial newspapers as early as 1721. Between 1785 and 1800 New England's Timothy Dwight and John Trumbull published almost a hundred series of light periodical essays. Joseph Dennie became the most popular of the early essayists as a result of his highly successful The Lay Preacher, begun in 1795.[17]

St. George Tucker's "Old Bachelor" essay numbered "26," on benevolence and slavery, was not only intended for newspaper publication but also had several analogues in newspaper and periodical publications contemporary with it. Tucker's essay on benevolence and slavery, labeled with the rubric "For the old Batchellor" and written in the form of a letter beginning with the salutation "Sir," was obviously originally drafted for Wirt's Enquirer column. The present condition of the manuscript of essay 26, unfolded and unposted, and the fact that Tucker was not in the habit of keeping copies of manuscripts he sent to the O.B. suggest that Tucker may never have sent this essay to Wirt. Probably Tucker would have included essay 26 in "The Hermit of the Mountain." A critical examination of this essay and of earlier and contemporary periodical literature reveals

that Tucker's essay was not without analogues.

Tucker begins his essay on benevolence and slavery with a discussion of benevolence. His argument is much like that of a sermon. Essentially he argues that God is benevolent, that man depends on God's benevolence, that man should strive to be like God, in other words to be benevolent, and that man should treat others as he wants them to treat him, in other words with benevolence. Besides Biblical analogues, such as those already mentioned in the notes to the typescript and the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-36), there are several analogues of this argument in the Spectator, especially No. 230, No. 588, and No. 601.

> No. 230 Friday, November 23, 1711
> Homines ad deos nulla re propius accedunt, quam salutem hominibus dando. --Tull.
> Men resemble the gods in nothing so much, as in doing good to their fellow-creatures.

> No. 588 Wednesday, Sept. 1, 1714
> ...that the most beneficent of all beings is he who hath an absolute fullness of perfection in himself, who gave existence to the universe, and so cannot be supposed to want that which he communicated, without diminishing from the plenitude of his own power and happiness....And as this is the true, the glorious character of the Deity, so in forming a reasonable creature he would not, if possible, suffer his image to pass out of his hands unadorned with a resemblance of himself in this most lovely part of his nature.

> No. 601 Friday, October 1, 1714
> Man is naturally a beneficent creature....there are some who delight in nothing so much as in doing good, and receive more of their happiness as secondhand, or by rebound from others, than by direct and immediate sensation.[18]

In addition, Tucker's homiletic logic in using benevolence as an argument against slavery may have been influenced by his correspondence with Rev. Jeremiah Belknap, D.D., of Boston. In his earlier Dissertation

on Slavery with A Proposal for the Gradual Abolition of It, in the State of Virginia Tucker acknowledges the influence of Rev. Belknap. However, in the Coleman-Tucker Collection none of Rev. Belknap's letters to St. George Tucker connect benevolence and slavery.

There are several analogues of Tucker's use of benevolence as an argument against slavery in The American Museum. This magazine, to which Tucker was a contributor and bound volumes of which are in Tucker's extant library, contains many anti-slavery articles, essays, and letters. In fact, there is at least one anti-slavery piece in each of volumes I (1787) through IX (1791) of The American Museum, and volume I contains the largest number of such pieces. In that volume is a moving anti-slavery article excerpted from the ninth of Crèvecoeur's Letters from an American Farmer. Following are three brief exemplary passages from other essays in volume I:

> May these considerations induce thee /Charlotte, Queen of Great Britian/ to interpose thy kind endeavours in behalf of this greatly oppressed people /American slaves/ whose adject situation gives them an additional claim to the pity and assistance of the generous mind....
>
> It is impossible for a benevolent mind to read of the torture to which this poor unhappy negro was exposed, without the utmost horror.
>
> All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets ...Matt. 7:12
>
> It having pleased the Creator of the world, to make of one flesh, all the children of men--it becomes them to consult and promote each other's happiness, as members of the same family, however diversified they may be, by colour, situation, religion or different states of society.[19]

Undoubtedly Tucker, assuming that he read them, was influenced by

pieces such as these on benevolence and slavery in The American Museum. The first quotation above is from "Letter on the slave trade" by Quaker Anthony Benezet. Tucker's argument for benevolence is the same as that of the Society of Friends. By 1813 when essay 26 was probably written, Tucker had undoubtedly been affected, at least partially, by the persuasion of Quakers like Anthony Benezet and Robert Pleasants.

Tucker's discussion in essay 26 of the origin and foundation of slavery, or the manner in which men have become slaves, is similar to the same sort of discussion in his earlier Dissertation on Slavery. Much of what Tucker has to say here is probably taken from his knowledge of legal history and from Justinian, Montesquieu, Rev. Jeremiah Belknap, Zephaniah Swift, Hargrave, Granville Sharpe, and others that Tucker credits in his Dissertation on Slavery. For example, the idea that the first slaves in history were probably captives taken in battle is found in Justinian.[20] In his Dissertation Tucker sweeps over world history to discuss slavery of every type, and he invokes primarily the philosophy of natural law to demonstrate the moral evil of slavery. Then Tucker outlines the history of slaveholding in Virginia, emphasizing all the laws passed on the subject from 1662 to 1796. Finally Tucker presents his proposal for gradual abolition. Here in essay 26 Tucker condenses and generalizes the world and Virginia history of slavery. Here, to a greater extent than in his Dissertation, Tucker invokes the Christian philosophy of benevolence to demonstrate the moral evil of slavery, but in essay 26 he offers no proposal for abolition.

Tucker's discussion in essay 26 of the diurnal habits of Major Opulent as opposed to those of his slaves is probably adapted from an article entitled "Manner of living of the inhabitants of Virginia" which appeared in The American Museum, January, 1787. The typical plantation owner described in this magazine article rises at six in the morning and retires about nine or ten in the evening. The typical Virginia slave, according to this same article, "is called up about day-break, and is seldom allowed time enough to swallow three mouthfuls of homminy, or hoe-cake, but is driven out immediately to the field to hard labour."[21] The negroes continue in the field "until dusk in the evening when they repair to the tobacco-houses, where each has his task in stripping allotted him, which employs him for some hours."[22] "The female slaves fare, labour, and repose, just in the same manner: even when they breed, which is generally every two or three years, they seldom lose more than a week's work thereby, either in the delivery, or suckling the child."[23]

The story that Tucker relates in this "Old Bachelor" essay about the cruel treatment of the pregnant slave by the overseer of his "particular friend in the Country" may be based on some atrocity that occurred on one of his wives' plantations. In November, 1787, Frances Bland Tucker, the jurist's first wife and the mistress of "Bizarre" plantation, wrote to her husband:

> ...I have determined to make use of the days of your absence to see into the Anarchy that at present reigns at Bizarre, the extreem, & repeated cruelty of the Overseer (who is not controled at all by Holcombe's repeated orders to the contrary) had driven off many of the most valuable Negroes one of which has come down

> to me on a horse which is an addition to the injury done the plantation - but the poor unhappy Wretch was unable to come to me without; I can no longer leave the miserable creatures a prey to the worst part of mankind, without endeavouring to mitigate, as far as is my power, the pangs of their cruel situation.[24]

The cruel overseer in Tucker's essay 26 may be patterned after the cruel overseer of "Bizarre" plantation. An even more likely model is a Mr. Robertson, the intemperate overseer of "Corotoman," a plantation which belonged to Lelia Skipwith Tucker, the jurist's second wife. On February 12, 1808, Tucker wrote to Joseph C. Cabell concerning Robertson:

> To strip a poor woman for overstaying her time with her Child a few minutes, was a piece of barbarianism.... And if this young Brute at Corrotoman is not check'd I shall not wonder if he is /murdered by the negroes/. I had almost said that I should not lament it: in such abhorrence do I hold Conduct of this Kind.[25]

Surely men like Robertson were in the thoughts of Tucker when he penned his essay on benevolence and slavery.

The blank verse poem signed "Coopers Tucke" near the end of essay 26 is made up of lines taken directly from William Cowper's The Task, Book II or "The Time-Piece." These lines are particularly appropriate for Tucker's essay. The Task, published in 1785, is a long meditative poem of over five thousand lines in which the poet describes his small world of country, village, garden, and parlor, stopping occasionally to condemn cities and worldliness, war and slavery, luxury and corruption. Literary historian Richard Beale Davis says that Tucker appears not to have known Cowper's works at all.[26] However, Tucker's selection of these lines from The

Task disproves Davis' speculation. Tucker might have selected instead the one poem on the subject of slavery which he himself wrote on December 25, 1812.

A Fable

I dreamed last night, the debt of nature paid,
I, cheek by jowl, was by a negro laid:
Provoked at such a neighborhood, I cried,
"Rascall begone. Rot farther from my side."
"Rascall!" said he, with arrogance extreme,
"Thou are the only rascal here, I deem;
Know fallen tyrant, I'm no more thy slave!
Quaco's a monarch's equal, in the grave."[27]

The sentimentality of Cowper's lines makes them more suitable to Tucker's essay than Tucker's own poem.

Basically Tucker's essay on benevolence and slavery is rational, disciplined, and social. The sentimentality with which it concludes--the incident involving the beating of the pregnant slave and the lines from The Task--may represent a shift in tone from neoclassical aloofness to quasi-romantic emotionality. However, more than anything else it is a rhetorical device designed to beguile the reader to accept the essay's stringent moral challenge. William Wirt viewed essay-writing as an opportunity of achieving something honorable for the author, as part of a scheme of self-discipline and study, and as a means of edifying youth.[28] Certainly Tucker, like Wirt and other essayists who strove to instruct and entertain, must have seen his purpose in essay 26 as that of fashioning the morals and directing the spirits of his countrymen. Implicit, if not explicit, in Tucker's didacticism is a spirit of optimism, an assumption of the existence of a benevolent God and a benevolent human nature.

To arouse the benevolence of his readers Tucker employs the hortatory prose characteristic of politics, oratory, and the newspaper essay in Jeffersonian Virginia.

The close association of politics, oratory, and the newspaper essay in Virginia made Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres, published in 1783, the greatest single direct influence on literature throughout the Jeffersonian period.[29] Lectures is a basic manual of rhetoric according to the principles of late neoclassical thinking. With its emphasis on logical persuasion based on fact, this textbook must certainly have affected the prose style of St. George Tucker. Neoclassical models must also have influenced Tucker's preference for lengthy, intricate sentences. Blair preferred the style of Addison to that of Johnson, and Tucker agreed. Tucker wrote:

> The example of Steele, & Addison in their Essays has been followed by several other writers in England, among whom Johnson, Hawksworth, & Goldsmith, I believe, have generally been admitted to take the Lead. The Idolaters of Johnson prefer his Rambler to all the rest: but I must confess that both the Spectator and the Guardian please me more, and Doctor Hawkesworth's Adventurer I have considered as in every respect its equal.[30]

Tucker's style owes a great deal to Addison and to other neoclassical models such as Bolingbroke and Hume.[31]

Perhaps the principal characteristic of Tucker's style in essay 26 is its neoclassical utilitarianism. Tucker is more concerned with saying what he has to say than with choosing the words to say it. Le mot juste means nothing to him. His straightforward style is based on common sense, sound judgment, and logical reasoning.

Tucker once said of his own writing,

> A plain intelligible didatic stile [sic] is what I aim'd at.... If the substance of what I read pleases me, I never stop to consider whether by any alteration of the structure of a Sentence, or the substitution of one word for another, the Beauty of the passage may be improved.[32]

Tucker's statement helps to explain his utilitarian style and may also help to explain his odd system of punctuation in essay 26. Perhaps Tucker punctuated according to the sense of what he was trying to say rather than according to any standard grammatical principles.

Since there are many contemporary essays written in England, in the North, and even in Virginia which are belletristically superior, St. George Tucker's essay on benevolence and slavery is perhaps most important as a document which helps increase the historian's understanding of Tucker's anti-slavery advocacy. Tucker's response to slavery was ambivalent; on the one hand he considered blacks as property and refused to assimilate them into white society, but on the other he considered blacks as persons and desired to free them. This ambivalence is reflected to some extent in a comparison of his A Dissertation on Slavery with a Proposal for the Gradual Abolition of It in the State of Virginia and his "Old Bachelor" essay on benevolence and slavery. His Dissertation is of course a proposal for abolition, but underlying it all is the concept of the slave as property. In addition, the argument for abolition, which is based primarily on political, economic, and social grounds, is most concerned with protecting the interests of the slaveholder. However,

Tucker's essay 26 is built on the concept of the slave as a person, and its argument for benevolence, which is based primarily on moral grounds, is most concerned with protecting the interests of the slave.

Notes to Critical Commentary

[1]Jay B. Hubbell, The South in American Literature 1607-1900 (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1954), p. 235.

[2]John P. Kennedy, Memoirs of The Life of William Wirt (Philadelphia: Blanchard and Lea, 1854), I, pp. 91, 105.

[3]Richard Beale Davis, Intellectual Life in Jefferson's Virginia, 1790-1830 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1964), p. 325.

[4]Hubbell, pp. 236-8.

[5]Davis, p. 283.

[6]Kennedy, I, p. 265.

[7]Davis, p. 284.

[8]Kennedy, p. 266.

[9]William Wirt to St. George Tucker, August 7, 1811, Tucker-Coleman Papers, Earl Gregg Swem Library, The College of William and Mary in Virginia. Hereafter cited simply as T-C Papers.

[10]Ibid.

[11]William Wirt to St. George Tucker, August 19, 1811, T-C Papers.

[12]William Wirt to St. George Tucker, August 22, 1812, T-C Papers.

[13]St. George Tucker to William Wirt, September 11, 1812, T-C Papers.

[14]St. George Tucker to William Wirt, September 12, 1813, Wirt Papers, MSS. #1011, Maryland Historical Society.

[15]William Wirt to St. George Tucker, October 10, 1813, T-C Papers.

[16]St. George Tucker, "The Hermit of the Mountain" notebook, T-C Papers.

[17]Anne Elizabeth McCorkle, "St. George Tucker's 'Old Bachelor' Letter on Language and Literature in America," M.A. Thesis College of William and Mary 1971, p. 47. The first American paper to imitate the Spectator was James Franklin's The New-England Courant, beginning in Boston on August 7, 1721. Then followed The South Carolina Gazette (established January 8, 1732) and The Virginia Gazette (first number appearing on August 6, 1736).

[18]Joseph Addison, Sir Richard Steele, et al., The Spectator, A new edition, complete in one volume (Cincinnati: Applegate & Co., 1852), pp. 289, 689, 701.

[19]The American Museum, Vol. I, 1 (January, 1787) ed. Mathew Carey (Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1787), pp. 123, 209, 388.

[20]St. George Tucker, Dissertation on Slavery with a Proposal for the Gradual Abolition of It in the State of Virginia (Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1796) p. 23.

[21]"Manner of living of the inhabitants of Virginia," The American Museum, Vol. I, 1 (January, 1787), p. 215.

[22]Ibid., p. 215.

[23]Ibid., p. 216.

[24]Quoted in Mrs. George P. (Mary Haldane) Coleman, Virginia Silhouettes: Contemporary Letters Concerning Negro Slavery in the State of Virginia (Richmond, Va.: The Dietz Press, 1934), pp. 3-4.

[25]Quoted in Donna Stillman Bryman, "St. George Tucker and the Complexities of Antislavery Advocacy in Jeffersonian Virginia," M.A. Thesis College of William and Mary 1972, p. 83.

[26]Davis, p. 96.

[27]Quoted in William S. Prince, "St. George Tucker as a Poet of the Early Republic," Diss. Yale University 1954, p. 313.

[28]Kennedy, I, P. 265.

[29]Davis, pp. 260-261.

[30]St. George Tucker, "The Hermit of the Mountain" notebook, T-C Papers, p. 6.

[31]Davis, p. 256.

[32]St. George Tucker to William Wirt, August 8, 1811, Wirt Papers, MSS. #1011, Maryland Historical Society.

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